



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) TEXAS TRANSITIONAL RECOVERY OFFICE

Hurricane Katrina & Rita Three Years Later

Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana on August 29, 2005 causing storm surges that flooded the coastal areas of Louisiana. Thousands of evacuee families from Louisiana fled to Beaumont, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas and other cities, large and small, across Texas. Those who stopped in Beaumont found themselves uprooted again just three weeks later when Hurricane Rita slammed into the Southeast Texas coast.

By mid-September, two weeks following Katrina's devastation, Texas had opened 242 shelters housing 137,000 Katrina evacuees. Federal and state officials began processing evacuees, evaluating their medical and housing needs, in addition to determining their eligibility for federal disaster assistance.

Families who evacuated to Houston found medical, housing, employment and childcare services through numerous voluntary and faith-based organizations available at the Houston area shelters including the Astrodome.

In San Antonio, thousands were housed at the former Kelly Air Force Base facilities and were met by that area's volunteer groups who offered childcare, medical and employment services, federal disaster assistance eligibility determination and information on returning to Louisiana. Other large arenas around the state processed evacuees for weeks after the hurricane. By October, approximately 195,000 evacuees had moved into about 82,000 hotel and motel rooms and thousands of rental units throughout the Lone Star State.

On September 24, Hurricane Rita made landfall along the Texas coast as a powerful Category 3 storm. As a result of this hurricane, 27 counties in Texas suffered damages and the State received a major disaster declaration for FEMA Public Assistance and Individual Assistance. The devastating results of this storm across the region demanded a recovery that continues nearly three years after the hurricane came ashore.

As of December 2007, fewer than 8,000 families who had fled to Texas were still receiving housing assistance from FEMA. Those families have now transitioned from FEMA housing assistance to the housing program operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP).

At one point, more than 4,600 FEMA travel trailers were used in southeast Texas by those families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by hurricane Rita. In January of 2007, the number had decreased to 2,400 with another decrease to 435 families living in FEMA travel trailers in January 2008. Today, three travel trailers are still occupied in Texas, and FEMA is working with these occupants to find alternate housing solutions.

FEMA's Public Assistance program has reimbursed public agencies in Texas for more than \$525,307,371 for Katrina-related costs. This funding reimbursed counties, cities, Public Housing Authorities and Councils of Governments throughout the State of Texas to provide sheltering and

housing for Hurricane Katrina evacuees. The FEMA Public Assistance Program reimbursed these providers for emergency protective measures, such as fire, police and security. The program also reimbursed expenses for intake services, shelter for evacuees, water, utilities, medical services, telecommunications, security, janitorial services, transportation and staffing costs incurred in placing evacuees in shelters, hotels, motels and apartments.

Before Hurricane Rita made landfall, an emergency declaration was issued. That declaration funded \$6,326,456 in emergency protective measures.

All Public Assistance categories of work were approved for this disaster including: Debris Removal, Emergency Protective Measures, Roads & Bridges, Water Control Facilities, Public Buildings, Public Utilities, Recreation and a few others. To date, \$394,154,168 has been obligated by FEMA to the State of Texas for Public Assistance.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) assists States to create safer communities by reducing the loss of life and property, enable individuals to recover more rapidly from floods and other disasters, and lessen the financial impact of disasters on the Nation. In Texas to date, \$102.8 million has been obligated to fund 187 projects. Those projects have resulted in a \$234 million dollar reduction of future disaster costs to the State.

A Final Note

Southeast Texas continues to recover, but these successes should also be noted:

- More than **\$94 million** in Other Needs Assistance (ONA) was approved for **81,123** Texas applicants to cover their personal property loss, medical costs, and other serious disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved more than **\$380 million** in low-interest disaster loans to residents and businesses affected by Hurricane Rita. The SBA provides low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, non-profit organizations and businesses of all sizes.
- Overall, **424,696** people affected by Hurricane Rita met with recovery experts at the Disaster Recovery Centers set up throughout the affected region to answer questions and provide help.